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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2022

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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RELEASES 2020 CHICAGO ENERGY BENCHMARKING REPORT

Report shows that benchmarked properties have decreased carbon dioxide emissions by 25% since 2016.

CHICAGO –Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today released the 2020 Chicago Energy Benchmarking Report which revealed a 25% reduction in carbon emissions per square foot in properties over 50,000 square feet and a rapid decline in energy use since 2016.

The Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance was passed by City Council in 2013 to unlock energy and cost savings opportunities in buildings over 50,000 square feet. By raising awareness of energy performance through information and transparency, building owners and tenants across Chicago are enabled to make better decisions about how energy is used to power buildings.

"We are incredibly pleased to release the 2020 Chicago Benchmarking Report, which continues to show the decline in emissions for our city," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The report raises critical awareness about energy performance and empowers our city's building owners and tenants to make efficient energy choices. By reducing our energy consumption in buildings, we will not only be one step closer toward creating a greener Chicago, but also toward fulfilling the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement."

The Chicago Energy Rating System was successfully rolled out in 2019 to increase awareness of energy use. Large building owners are now required to display a placard illustrating their building's energy performance to the public. Chicago is proud to have been the first city in the nation to require this kind of transparency, and others are following this lead. 650 buildings that secured the top energy rating this year, which represents a 6% increase from 2019.

The Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance uses the 1 – 100 ENERGY STAR score to track energy performance, which considers occupancy, operational characteristics, and Chicago's climate zone. The median ENERGY STAR score for all reporting properties in 2020 was 60, a 3-point increase since 2019, higher than the national median of 50. This



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indicates Chicago properties over 50,000 square feet are performing slightly better than most comparable buildings in the U.S.

Furthermore, there was a 30% increase in properties that received ENERGY STAR certification since 2016, indicating Chicago properties increasingly meet strict energy performance standards set by EPA. These properties use less energy, are less expensive to operate, and cause fewer GHG emissions than their peers.

The benchmarking report details an analysis of nearly 2,900 properties spanning over 720 million square feet across the city. When comparing total greenhouse gas emissions from nearly 2,000 properties that reported in 2017 and again reported in 2020, total GHG emissions are down 25% per square foot, which equates to over 200,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e), equivalent to removing nearly 55,000 passenger cars from the road each year. “Today we celebrate the release of this report as well as the significant reduction in carbon emissions from our largest buildings,” said Chief Sustainability Officer Angela Tovar. “Chicago is proud to lead on a bold building decarbonization strategy that drives equitable solutions to reducing emissions in buildings across all neighborhoods.”

Currently, buildings account for 70% of Chicago’s greenhouse gas emissions and the City must improve energy efficiency in buildings to meet our long-term climate goals. Reducing energy consumption is a significant step towards the City’s continued commitment to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, including a 26-28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 and reaching 100% renewable energy by 2035. The Lightfoot administration is underway with collaborative efforts to develop and enact strategies that will develop an equity-based Climate Action Plan in 2022 and move Chicago to reach its climate commitments over the next decade.

“A hallmark of Chicago’s successful implementation of the benchmarking ordinance has been ongoing communications and availability of technical assistance for building owners,” explains Gustavo Sandoval, Project Manager at Elevate. “The City of Chicago remains committed to working with building owners in providing useful tools and guidance towards applicable energy-saving programs in our region.”

Chicago is one of 25 cities selected to participate in the American Cities Climate Challenge, an effort to resource cities to take strong action to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change and impacts public health. As part of the challenge, Chicago has pledged to take bold action to reduce emissions from its building and transportation sectors. Details about the Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance and the 2020 Report are available on the City’s energy benchmarking page at chicago.gov/energybenchmarking.



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